

## WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1/ A spacer for putting into place on a tubular element, the spacer comprising firstly a sleeve of high-compressibility cellular material, said sleeve presenting a wide slot extending over its entire length and defining a central passage that is essentially cylindrical, of diameter greater than the nominal diameter of the tubular element, and secondly a sheath of heat-shrink plastics material surrounding the split sleeve at least as far as the end edges thereof, said sheath being partially shrunk on the split sleeve firstly so as to hold said split sleeve in the open state for putting the spacer into place on the tubular element, and secondly so as to be able subsequently to be heat-shrunk to clamp said split sleeve and fix said spacer in position.

2/ A spacer according to claim 1, wherein the sleeve presents a slot that extends axially.

3/ A spacer according to claim 1, wherein the sleeve presents a slot that extends obliquely or helically.

4/ A spacer according to claim 1, wherein the partially-shrunk sheath stops at the end edges of the split sleeve.

5/ A spacer according to claim 1, wherein the partially-shrunk sheath overlaps the end edges of the split sleeve at least in part.

6/ A spacer according to claim 5, wherein the sheath extends beyond at least one of the end edges of the split sleeve, forming a cylindrical lip of inside diameter greater than the nominal diameter of the tubular element.

7/ A spacer according to claim 6, wherein the cylindrical lip extending the sheath contributes to fixing the spacer

in position by virtue of adhesive provided on the inside face of said lip.

8/ A spacer according to claim 1, wherein the outside of  
5 the sheath presents identification marking and/or color.

9/ A spacer according to claim 1, wherein the split sleeve is made of closed-cell cellular foam.

10 10/ A spacer according to claim 1, wherein the sheath is made of plastics material that is both a heat-shrink material and suitable for providing the split sleeve with mechanical and/or chemical protection.